



**U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service**

# News Release

*Pacific Islands External Affairs Office*

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## **Habitat Restoration and Protection Grants Offered by U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service**

In an effort to reduce the conflicts between hunting programs and endangered species protection, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is once again offering grants for habitat restoration and protection actions across the State of Hawaii through its unique Hawaii Endangered Species Act Community Conservation Initiative. Landowner and community group projects that enhance public hunting opportunities, enhance populations of endangered and threatened species, or benefit both game and listed species such as wildland fire prevention are eligible for funding through the initiative.

“This program has proven quite successful in bringing together two diverse groups, hunters and conservationists, toward one common goal of protecting habitat and its wildlife for future generations, while at the same time allowing traditional hunting programs to continue in appropriate areas,” said Gina Shultz, acting field supervisor for the Fish and Wildlife Service’s Pacific Islands Office.

This is the fourth year of funding for this important initiative. Last year, the program awarded over \$600,000 for 17 habitat restoration projects across the State of Hawaii. Groups such as the Big Island Bird Hunters were awarded money to improve mamane-naio habitat at the Pohakuloa Game Management Area through fencing, outplanting, and game bird management; the Maui Pineapple Company installed an eight-foot fence to keep axis deer and other ungulates out of the Puu Kukui Preserve; and Pono Pacific, Inc. built exclosures at the Puuanahulu Game Management Area to protect rare plants.

Conflicts between hunters and conservationists often arise when game mammal populations occur on landscapes that harbor vulnerable plant, invertebrate, and bird species. Game mammals can reduce populations of endangered species by eating, trampling, and degrading native habitats.

As native species continue to decline, state and federal governments must evaluate whether to list them as threatened or endangered, and (in the case of the federal government) to designate critical habitat.

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Project proposals must include: summary of the proposed action; description of benefits to game animals, listed species or both; timeline of activities; name and contact information of the organization or individual that will receive the funds and complete the work; location and map of proposed work area; indication of landowner approval and a project budget (As a goal, the grant program seeks a 1:1 cost share match. Although not a requirement, applicants are encouraged to include the cost share percentage which will be considered in ranking the projects).

Project proposals can be submitted directly to the Fish and Wildlife Service's Honolulu office at 300 Ala Moana Blvd., Room 3-122, Box 50088, Honolulu, Hawaii 96850. Deadline for submissions is March 31, 2005. For more information, contact project coordinator Benton Pang at 808/792-9400 or by electronic mail at *benton\_pang@fws.gov*.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is the principal Federal agency responsible for conserving, protecting and enhancing fish, wildlife and plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. The Service manages the 95-million-acre National Wildlife Refuge System, which encompasses 545 national wildlife refuges, thousands of small wetlands and other special management areas. It also operates 69 national fish hatcheries, 64 fishery resources offices and 81 ecological services field stations. The agency enforces federal wildlife laws, administers the Endangered Species Act, manages migratory bird populations, restores nationally significant fisheries, conserves and restores wildlife habitat such as wetlands, and helps foreign and Native American tribal governments with their conservation efforts. It also oversees the Federal Assistance program, which distributes hundreds of millions of dollars in excise taxes on fishing and hunting equipment to state fish and wildlife agencies.